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(54) Title Computer-readable medium

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(73) Patent Granted to EUROSYMBOL LIMITED, AN IRISH COMPANY, OF UNIT 6, THOMSON ENTERPRISE CENTRE, CLANE INDUSTRIAL PARK, CLANE, CO. KILDARE.

COMPUTER-READABLE MEDIUM

This invention relates to a computer-readable medium.

On January 1, 1999, the European Union will introduce the new single european currency, the Euro, which will overnight become one of the world's most important trading currencies. This is an unprecedented event in modern times. This poses an immediate problem to business throughout the world; there is no key on any standard computer keyboard corresponding to the new symbol for the Euro currency unit (herein referred to as the Eurosymbol).

A typical personal computer installation includes system unit and a visual display unit and keyboard both attached to the system unit. Striking a key, or a combination of keys at the same time, on the keyboard gives rise to a single character being displayed on the screen of the VDU. In general, the character associated with a given keystroke(s) will depend on the particular program or application being run on the computer at that time. In particular, if a word processing program is being run, the character associated with the keystroke will depend on the font chosen. Many font types are well known, such as Times New Roman, Arial, Courier, etc.

A method of implementing a font for use in a computer word processing program is to provide a file, either on the computer hard disk or on a diskette readable from the computer's disk drive, which defines each character of the font in the particular typographic style of the font, e.g. Times New Roman, etc., and associates each character thus defined with a particlar key or combination of keys on the

keyboard. These days the character/key associations are to a large extent standardised, and the standard associations are indicated by actually inscribing the assigned character on each key, leading to the familiar QWERTY keyboard, with minor variations for languages other than English.

The word processing program reads this font file on startup, and subsequently every time a keystroke is performed the corresponding character in the file will be displayed on the screen. The output from this word processing program can in general be downloaded to a printer to produce a hard copy of the document.

Although some of the lesser used keys may differ from keyboard to keyboard, especially in different counties, there is, as noted above, no key on any standard computer keyboard corresponding to the new Eurosymbol.

Accordingly, this invention provides a computer-readable medium having a font file stored thereon of which one of the font characters is the Eurosymbol.

An example of a suitable font is shown in the accompanying drawing, where the Eurosymbol is shown at top left. In an embodiment of the invention, this font is coded in the format specified for the Windows operating system, versions 3 and higher and 95 and higher, and stored on a diskette. By virtue of its position in the font, the Eurosymbol will replace the upper case character (¬) normally associated with the key at top left of the standard keyboard, next to the "1/!" key, and hereinafter referred to as the Eurokey. This key is redundant in most Windows 95 word processing

applications. Thus, when the font is loaded into the computer and selected for a particular word processing application, pressing SHIFT + the Eurokey will cause the Eurosymbol to be displayed.

To indicate to the user of the computer that the Eurokey is now associated with the Eurosymbol, the diskette containing the font file may be sold as a package together with a cap, preferably made of plastics material, which fits snugly over the Eurokey and is inscribed with the Eurosymbol. Alternatively, the package may contain an adhesive label, also inscribed with the Eurosymbol, which may be stuck over the symbols normally appearing on the Eurokey. The label may also be partially transparent to indicate the original functions of the key.

The invention is not limited to the embodiment described herein which may be varied within the scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS

1. A computer-readable medium having a font file stored thereon of which one of the font characters is the Eurosymbol.

2. A computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 1, wherein the medium is a magnetic diskette.

3. A package containing a computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 1 or 2 and an element for attachment to that key of a computer keyboard which generates the Eurosymbol when depressed, the element bearing an image of the Eurosymbol.

4. A package as claimed in claim 3, wherein the said element is a cap which fits over the said key.

5. A package as claimed in claim 3, wherein the said element is an adhesive label.